



SAFETY --- Network

SPECIAL EDITION

www.michigan.gov/ohsp

VOL. 12, NO. 2

Federal grant helps reduce blood-screening backlogs *Toxicology lab to get relief*

Toxicologists in the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Laboratory have been busy these days.

At no cost to Michigan law enforcement agencies, the lab will analyze blood draws to test drivers suspected for use of drugs and/or alcohol. Law enforcement agencies have been using the service more frequently since September 2003 when the tougher alcohol limit law was passed. Under the new law, it is illegal for anyone to drive with any detectable amount of a Schedule I drug (marijuana, cocaine, heroin, etc.) in his or her bloodstream.

Agencies also have been requesting toxicology lab personnel to appear in court to strengthen drugged-driving cases, reducing time spent analyzing blood draws. More samples, combined with less time in the lab, have caused a backlog in the system. Results now take up to four times longer.

To help eliminate the backlog and make sure prosecutors have the tools they need to win cases, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is providing the lab an \$800,000 grant to hire additional personnel and purchase equipment.

"This grant will allow the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division to hire additional personnel and purchase the equipment necessary to alleviate the backlog of toxicology samples that has resulted from changes in the state's drug and alcohol laws," stated Colonel Tadarial J. Sturdivant, director of the Michigan State Police. "This funding will help to move



The Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division will hire three additional forensic scientists and purchase the equipment needed to process the influx of alcohol and drug cases.

drug and alcohol screenings through our system quicker, ensuring dangerous drivers are removed from our roads and not a threat to the motoring public."

For more information, contact Jason Hamblen at (517) 333-5319 or HamblenJ@michigan.gov.

FACT - evidence bolsters drunk driving cases

FACT to collect evidence, win at trial

Arresting drunk drivers who cause fatal crashes is only half of the battle. Making sure their cases are prosecuted successfully is what makes the difference between a conviction and an acquittal.

To assist with this battle, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) has granted \$10,000 to a group to explore the possibility of forming a Fatal Alcohol Crash Team (FACT). The FACT will include prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and other traffic safety professionals who are on call day and night to provide additional resources at the site of a crash.

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Summit offers FACT presentation

Law and Order: FACT will be offered as a general session during the 10th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit in March. Lieutenant George Crooks, FACT Coordinator, Marion County Prosecutor's Office and Joel Hand, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, will speak about the FACT program from 1 pm. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 1. To register for the Summit, please visit www.michigan.gov/ohsp and complete the registration form.

If young drivers are STOPPED, their parents will know

Sheriffs to notify parents of their STOPPED children

Young drivers soon will have another incentive to drive safely on Michigan's roads.

The Michigan Sheriffs' Association, funded by a Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) grant, is piloting the Sheriffs Telling Our Parents and Promoting Educated Drivers



(STOPPED) program in six counties.

When parents and their teenage drivers enroll in the program, the participating sheriff's office will notify the parents when a deputy has conducted a traffic stop with their young driver. Deputies will identify participants by a special STOPPED decal placed in the car's window.

The program's intent is to increase parental involvement in their children's behaviors while they are driving. This reinforcement is necessary in Michigan, as a disproportionate number of young drivers ages 15-24 are involved in car crashes. This age group represents 13.7 percent of the state's total population but is involved in 23.9 percent of car crashes.

Enrollment in the STOPPED program will provide teenagers with a constant visual reminder of their accountability as they travel on their own. When a young driver is stopped, parents may be notified of the time, location, reason for being stopped, and number of passengers. Deputies also may note who was driving and whether a citation was issued. Each sheriff's office will

The Michigan Sheriffs' Association selected six counties, representing urban, suburban, and rural environments, for the pilot program:

**Calhoun County
Clinton County
Ingham County
St. Clair County
Tuscola County
Van Buren County**

decide what information to include.

The association expects to enroll approximately 450 parents or guardians in the program the first year, with plans of expanding the program to more counties and reaching more parents in the future.

For more information, contact Dianne Perukel at (517) 333-5337 or PerukelD@michigan.gov.

Technology helps pinpoint crash locations

To save lives and prevent future car crashes, traffic safety officials need to know as much detailed information about crashes as possible. One of the variables most left up to interpretation is location.

Whenever a crash causes a fatality, injury, or at least \$1,000 worth of property damage, officers complete the UD-10 crash report form. The detailed form includes crash type, weather conditions, road conditions, and occupant information. Officers also must indicate crash location, which can be difficult if a crash happens close to, but not at, an intersection or is in a rural area miles from the nearest intersection.

If the computer system cannot match a location with what the officer described, the accident site is considered "unlocated." In the past, out of 400,000 crashes that happened each year, a quarter were unlocated. Because of system improvements, the number of unlocated crashes in 2004 has been reduced to approximately 10 percent. This enhances the quality of data for both engineering and enforcement purposes.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is giving grants in fiscal year 2005 to other state agencies in an effort to further improve crash locating and mapping. The Michigan Department of State Police, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and Michigan Department of Information Technology will develop and deploy a mapping tool and a new crash-locating software suite. The \$400,000 grant will be used to give crash locators an

electronic map, where they can "zoom" easily and quickly to an exact location. The new software will facilitate crash location, both for the on-site officer and data analysts.

The Michigan Department of State Police's Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC) will develop an automated system and process to provide public electronic access to crash reports at a central location, relieving law enforcement of the time spent fulfilling requests for crash reports. The \$125,000 grant will help give the public access to UD-10 forms over a web-based system.

These grants are the next step in an effort to upgrade the system. OHSP, MDOT, and the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) already have spent \$10 million over the past 2 ½ years for improvements and upgrades.

OHSP will continue funding the Law Enforcement Agency Management System (LEAMS), which will allow officers to complete the UD-10 with a computer.

Michigan law enforcement agencies will be able to learn about UD-10 form changes and other traffic-record issues through Managed Learning Environment, a series of long-distance learning courses. The three-year enrollment goal is 20,000 officers, who will be able to take online training and track their progress through the system. The \$400,000 grant to CJIC will support hardware, software, and personnel. The project is expected to last for three years.

For more information, contact Steve Schreier at (517) 333-5306 or SchreieS@michigan.gov.

Officers to enforce intersection violations

Car crashes happen everywhere: on the highway, on country roads, and even in parking lots. But 30 percent of crashes in 2003 happened where motorists should have been slowing to a stop or yielding to others—intersections.

While the overall number of intersection crashes, fatalities, and injuries in Michigan are declining, crashes at intersections still result in more fatalities and serious injuries than on any other road segments.

Participating agencies

Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office
Michigan State Police Alpena Post
Monroe County Sheriff's Office
Muskegon County Sheriff's Office
Saginaw County Sheriff's Office
Wyoming Police Department

Running a red light is a common cause of intersection crashes. To reduce the number of crashes, fatalities, and injuries, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) will support an intersection enforcement pilot for fiscal year 2005.

"If we look at the crashes and where most serious-injury crashes are occurring, they're occurring at intersections," said Officer Mark Easterly of the Wyoming Police Department. "Hopefully we'll save some lives, injuries, money, and property damage."

The six participating local and county law enforcement agencies will conduct intersection

enforcement between February and May or June through August.

Each agency will identify one or two intersections that have a high crash "profile" based on data. They'll determine what time frames would be most effective and then will decide on an enforcement method.

Methods include using an officer as a "spotter" who would identify cars that have run a red light and notify other officers of the car's approach, where they could then pull the car over safely. Another involves the Red Light Running Box (RLRB), which contains light-emitting diodes that alert officers downstream when a car has run a red light. These methods allow officers to situate themselves within a safe distance from the intersection.

Three agencies will use RLRBs, and the other three will use spotters. Wyoming Police Department will use RLRBs, also known as rat boxes.

"I think it will help safety-wise because normally it's hard to position yourself, and this way you can at least get a little way down the street and enforce the intersection alone," Easterly said.

The law enforcement agencies will notify motorists about the intersection safety campaign in advance by sending a press release to local media.

The goal of intersection enforcement is that by 2009 there will be fewer than 100,000 intersection crashes, 300 fatalities, and 3,000 injuries. If that goal is met, approximately 150 lives would be saved over five years.

For more information, contact Steve Schreier at (517) 333-5306 or SchreieS@michigan.gov.

Statewide traffic officers' association launched

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) will pilot a statewide Traffic Commanders/Officers Association in fiscal year 2005 to organize traffic commanders and officers who have an interest in traffic safety. The association will be open to local officers, deputies, and Michigan State Police troopers.

The association, spearheaded by the Midland Police Department, will collect and disseminate information regarding:

- Successful traffic enforcement techniques used by the officer
- Legal interpretations of the Motor Vehicle Code
- Traffic enforcement training being offered throughout the state

The first step of sharing this information will be creating a web site for law enforcement officers.

"The site will be a clearinghouse for different traffic safety program ideas," said Lieutenant Gerry Ladwig of the Midland Police Department. "We'll

communicate with all law enforcement agencies when it's developed, and then they can let us know if they have any suggestions."

The association also will assist OHSP with promoting its first traffic enforcement officer conference in October 2005. The two-day event will conclude with the annual Law Enforcement Challenge Luncheon. One of the group's other goals will be to recognize the contributions that officers have made to traffic safety.

For more information, contact Pat Eliason at (517) 333-5318 or EliasonP@michigan.gov.

Safety Network is published by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP). This special edition on OHSP grant projects was published in February 2005. Articles were written by Nikki Klemmer, OHSP's Program Outreach and Marketing Coordinator.

Assessments help OHSP plan for future

This fall and winter, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is taking an in-



depth look into four of its program areas to see where it is successful and where challenges lie.

Program coordinators are conducting statewide assessments of traffic records, motorcycle, alcohol, and child passenger safety programs. OHSP has coordinated assessments in the past, but four in the same fiscal year is unusual—and a major undertaking. The last assessment took place in 1999.

Each assessment takes five days. Experts from across the country in each of the following fields evaluate the program: program management, public infor-

mation and education, enforcement and adjudication, training, and evaluation.

OHSP secures experts from states with similar characteristics—size, rural/urban mix, demographics, and laws. Traffic safety partners, including law enforcement, hospitals, universities, and others, serve as presenters and talk about the programs.

After hearing from partners and reviewing background information about the programs, the assessors create an independent report with recommendations and details about what's working and what's not.

"We use the recommendations as our guide to the Highway Safety Plan for future planning," said Debbie Savage, OHSP grant operations unit manager. "It's a guidebook for what to do and how to

improve."

The motorcycle program is one area that has never been assessed. Michigan data shows that people are buying more motorcycles as baby boomers age. OHSP wants to find out how this affects crash statistics and what it can do to save lives.

When laws change, assessments help determine the effects. Since the last alcohol assessment in 1996, laws regarding repeat offenders and the blood alcohol content (BAC) limit changed. At the same time, alcohol-related crashes have gone down. The assessment will help determine what worked—enforcement, the laws themselves, public information and education, or perhaps some other factors.

For more information, contact Debbie Savage at (517) 333-5324 or SavageD@michigan.gov.

Enforcement efforts to expand this summer

With Michigan's safety belt use at 90 and rising, the heat will be on this summer. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OSHP) will step up enforcement efforts to maintain the state's record-high use rate of 90.5 percent and reduce drunk-driving crashes.

The summer season will kick off with a *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* safety belt mobilization over the Memorial Day period and will cap with an alcohol enforcement mobilization that includes Labor Day weekend.

Expanding on past success, OHSP will fund overtime safety belt enforcement in 50 counties. Funding will also support training and materials for non-overtime safety belt enforcement zones statewide.

State, county, and local police agencies help curb drunk driving and encourage safety belt use by participating in mobilizations over holiday weekends, but in 2005 they'll also receive support to crack down all summer long.

Fatal crashes are most likely to occur during the summer months, so continued traffic enforcement during this period is intended to reduce the risks.

For more information, contact Pat Eliason at (517) 333-5318 or EliasonP@michigan.gov.

Summer enforcement dates

**Click It or Ticket
May 23 - June 5**

**You Drink & Drive. You Lose.
August 19 - September 5**



It's a FACT - evidence bolsters cases

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Officers don't always know what evidence will help prosecutors win a case, and prosecutors are not always aware of everything an officer does at a crash site. By serving as a direct resource for law enforcement at crash sites, the team makes sure the evidence needed to strengthen cases is collected. This project will serve as a model in Michigan and other states for the detection and prosecution of drunk drivers.

FACT is modeled after an Indianapolis program where prosecutors were trained in reconstruction. In the two years since that program was implemented, prosecutors haven't lost a case yet.

For more information, contact Jason Hamblen at (517) 333-5319 or HamblenJ@michigan.gov.

